

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 ACDA-12 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-15
CEQ-01 /129 W

-----087530 231400Z /75

R 231244Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2052
INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 11470

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, MPOL, FN, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIETS POSITIVE, BUT COOL TO KEKKONEN SPEECH

REF: STOCKHOLM 1914

SUMMARY: THE SOVIETS HAVE REACTED POSITIVELY TO FINNISH
PRESIDENT KEKKONEN'S REVIVAL (WITH AMENDMENTS) OF HIS
1963 PROPOSAL TO CREATE A NUCLEAR FREE ZONE
IN NORTHERN EUROPE. THE POSITIVE REACTION, HOWEVER,
IS AT THE SAME TIME RESTRAINED TO A DEGREE WHICH
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SUGGESTS THAT THE SOVIETS WERE NOT AT ALL ENTHUSIASTIC
ABOUT THE IDEA RESURFACING AT THE PRESENT TIME. END
SUMMARY.

1. IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENT THE SOVIETS HAVE
PRAISED THE KEKKONEN MAY 8 NUCLEAR-FREE PROPOSAL AS AN
"IMPORTANT INITIATIVE" WHICH DESERVES "SERIOUS

CONSIDERATION." THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, REFRAINED FROM JOINING IN PUSHING THE IDEA AND INSTEAD HAVE LIMITED THEMSELVES TO SAYING THAT THE USSR IS PREPARED TO "DISCUSS" THE MATTER WITH THE STATES CONCERNED, IF THOSE STATES WISH TO DISCUSS IT. AFTER A WEEK'S DELAY, TWO COMMENTARIES ON MAY 16 (IZVESTIYA) AND MAY 17 (PRAVDA) TOOK THIS LINE, WITH IZVESTIYA NOTING THAT SWEDISH FON.MIN. SOEDER "EXPRESSED HER COUNTRY'S READINESS TO DISCUSS (THE PROPOSAL) WITH OTHER COUNTRIES CONCERNED." NO MENTION, OF COURSE, IS MADE OF THE RESERVATIONS SHE HAD ABOUT THE IDEA (REFTEL).

2. SOME INDICATION OF THE SOVIET RESERVE IS SEEN IN AN OTHERWISE UNNOTEWORTHY ARTICLE IN IZVESTIYA MAY 17, PART OF THE ROUTINE PRE-SSOD BUILDUP. ALTHOUGH ITS MAIN THEME IS THE VALUE OF REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS, IN PARTICULAR FOR CONTROLLING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, THE ARTICLE FAILS TO MENTION THE KEKKONEN PROPOSAL, EVEN THOUGH IT GIVES A FAIRLY LENGTHY LISTING OF REGIONAL ARMS CONTROL PROPOSALS WHICH IT CONSIDERS OF IMPORTANCE. THE APPEARANCE OF THIS PIECE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE OBLIGATORY ENDORSEMENTS, IS A CERTAIN INDICATION THAT THE SOVIETS WISHED TO PUT SOME PERSPECTIVE ON THE PREVIOUS COMMENTARIES WITHOUT BEING NEGATIVE ON THE IDEA. OUR NORDIC COLLEAGUES HERE CONFIRM THAT THEY HAVE SEEN NOTHING TO CONTRADICT THE CONFIDENTIAL

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ABOVE PRESS ANALYSIS, INDEED THE INITIAL REACTION FROM THE MFA GIVEN TO THE FINNISH EMBASSY HERE HAS BEEN, ACCORDING TO A FINNISH EMBOFF, CORRECTLY POSITIVE, BUT RESERVED AND UNENTHUSIASTIC.

3. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, THE FINNS CONSULTED WITH NO ONE BEFORE THE KEKKONEN SPEECH WAS DELIVERED IN ORDER TO INSURE THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DILUTION OF THE "PURELY FINNISH" PROPOSAL. THERE WAS PARTICULAR CONCERN THAT THE KEKKONEN SPEECH BE SEEN IN THIS LIGHT BY THE OTHER NORDICS AND THAT THERE BE NO SUSPICION THAT THE FINNS WERE CARRYING THE SOVIET'S WATER IN THIS AFFAIR. FOR THIS REASON THE SPEECH BEGAN WITH THE NOTATION THAT KEKKONEN WAS SPEAKING "AS A FINN, A NORDIC AND A EUROPEAN, IN THAT ORDER."

4. THE FINNS, ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, EXPECTED THE SOVIET UNION TO RESPOND FAVORABLY, BUT THEY ARE AWARE OF SOVIET CONCERNS WHICH WILL CAUSE THEM TO BE VERY CAUTIOUS IN ANY SUPPORT OF THE IDEA (VIZ, THAT THE BALTIC, KOLA PENINSULA, AND WESTERN BORDER AREAS OF THE USSR COULD BE SOMEHOW DRAWN INTO THE ISSUE).

SOVIET MFA CONTACTS STRESSED TO THE FINNS THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH TO THE SUPPORT OF ALL THE NORDIC STATES FOR ENTERING INTO CONVERSATIONS BEFORE THE SOVIETS WOULD BE WILLING TO ENTER TALKS. ASKED IF THE SOVIETS HAD COMMENTED ON THE CRUISE MISSILE REMARKS OF KEKKONEN, THE SOURCE SAID NO, BUT THAT THE SDVIETS HAD NOT YET COMMENTED ON ANY OF THE DETAILS OF THE SPEECH. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE USSR MAY WISH TO CONSIDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF KEKKONEN'S REMARKS ON THEIR TACTICAL-RANGE CRUISE MISSILES BEFORE MAKING ANY COMMENT ON KEKKONEN'S STATEMENT, IF EVEN THEN.

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5. COMMENT: WE CONCLUDE, THEREFORE, THAT THE SOVIETS FELT OBLIGED TO RESPOND FAVORABLY TO THE KEKKONEN SPEECH, BUT THEY DID SO PREFUNCTIONALLY AND NOT WITHOUT RESERVATION. GIVEN NORWEGIAN AND DANISH POLICIES AGAINST STATIONING NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON THEIR TERRITORY, THE SOVIET UNION HAS VIRTUALLY A NUCLEAR-FREE ZONE IN

PRACTICE AT PRESENT. ANY ATTEMPT TO CREATE DE JURE CONTROLS, WOULD ONLY RISK FORCING THE ISSUE OF SOVIET NUCLEAR PRESENCE IN THE BALTIC AND IN THE REGIONS OF THE USSR ADJACENT TO THE NORDIC COUNTRIES. FOR THIS TO SURFACE ON THE EVE OF THE SSOD, ALSO, CANNOT BE PLEAS-
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ING TO THE SOVIETS SINCE IT COULD EXCITE ATTENTION IN THAT FORUM WHERE THE SOVIETS ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO CONTROL AND INFLUENCE THE DISCUSSIONS AND DEBATES THAN IN THE LESS PUBLIC AND MORE "NEIGHBORLY" ENVIRONMENT OF THE NORDIC STATES THEMSELVES.

6. FINALLY, THE SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS THAT THE NORTHERN AREAS ARE RIPE FOR A PERIOD OF RELATIVE CALM AND LOW-GRADE PRESSURE FOLLOWING THE INTENSE PERIOD CULMINATING WITH THE KOSYGIN OUTBURST IN HELSINKI LAST YEAR. ZEMSKOV INITIATED THIS TACTIC PERSONALLY DURING HIS JANUARY VISIT TO NORWAY, THE SOVIET'S REGIONAL BETE NOIR. IN SO FAR AS KEKKONEN'S PROPOSAL RISKS MOVING NORDIC ISSUES OFF THE BACK BURNER TO WHICH MOSCOW HAS RELEGATED THEM LATELY, KEKKONEN COULD BE INTERFERING WITH THE SOVIET PATTERN OF ALTERNATING PRESSURE WITH RELAXATION IN THIS AREA. MATLOCK

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